

Working to provide small businesses the capital they need to grow and create jobs, the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday, October 29, passed H.R.3854, the Small Business Financing and Investment Act of 2009.

"Our small businesses are the backbone of our economy and by helping them, we help our entire community," said Halvorson, a member of the House Small Business Committee. "I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of this important legislation. By strengthening and expanding the Small Business Administration's loan programs, we'll strengthen small businesses across our state and country. It's these small businesses that will put us on the road to economic recovery; this bill is a great step in expediting that process."

The bill contained provisions from Rep. Halvorson's Small Business Credit Expansion and Loan Markets Stabilization Act (H.R.3723), which modernizes the SBA's 7(a) loan program. By modernizing the loan program, small businesses will have access to greater capital by increasing the maximum SBA 7(a) loan from \$2 million to \$3 million. Veteran-owned small businesses will receive additional help through the permanent establishment of the Increased Veteran Participation Loan Program. The bill also creates a Rural Lender Outreach Program that will increase lending opportunities for small businesses in rural communities.

The bill, which passed with a wide bipartisan margin of 389 to 32. The bill contains provisions to support small community banks and credit unions by allowing them greater access to the 7(a) loan program, and extends and improves the America's Recovery Capital program, which was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide interest free loans to small businesses to help them pay off existing debt.

"I speak frequently with small business owners who want to grow and hire new employees, but just can't because they don't have the resources," said Halvorson. "This legislation will help make those resources available, and will help make our communities stronger and more prosperous."